

# PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND STUDIES

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## Introduction

After several years of crawling, then walking, a great partnership has been forged and is ready to run toward a very worthy goal. To set the stage for discussion, we will review who the partners are, their missions, and what the partners are commissioned to accomplish.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (OASAALT)/Army Acquisition Executive (AAE) is responsible for the Army's entire acquisition program. This mission encompasses all aspects of the process—from alpha through omega.

The U.S. Military Academy (USMA), the other partner, is one of the Army's essential sources of commissioned officers (the uniformed leaders and managers of the Army). Its mission is to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader committed to the values of duty, honor, and country; is provided professional growth opportunities throughout his or her career as an officer in the U.S. Army; and provides a lifetime of selfless service to the Nation.

At first glance, it may seem that these critical missions, each essential to the Army, are somewhat independent. However, evolving circumstances at USMA have created conditions that make them mutually supporting and synergistic (even symbiotic).

## Background

By way of preamble, it is important to note that few challenges facing the

Army are more daunting than those of acquisition. It is resource-intensive, scientific, technical, legalistic, political, rapidly changing, and enormous in scope. Acquisition is second only to soldiers in terms of importance to the Army's mission. For the acquisition process to be successful, the myriad problems its managers encounter must be solved through ongoing research and study in laboratories, centers, and commands throughout the Army, and USMA is in a good position to help.

The academy has a continuing tradition of providing valuable research for the Army. These efforts also support the academy's mission by enhancing the educational experience for cadets and by supporting faculty professional development. Currently, the faculty consists of about 15 percent field grade officers who have doctoral degrees, and approximately 60 percent senior captains and junior majors holding master's degrees. The remaining faculty consists of civilian professors who are doctoral-level professionals in their various fields. Adding to the population of those who can contribute to the partnership effort are officers in advanced degree programs.

Each year, to sustain the military faculty, the Army selects officers to pursue graduate degrees at the Nation's finest universities. As students, these officers must prepare theses or dissertations attendant to graduation and follow-on assignment to the USMA faculty. Where appropriate, their research can support the AAE mission. Further, it

can then be applied to subsequent study with cadets when the officer joins an academic department.

## Discussion

The present partnership between OASAALT and USMA had its genesis in the early 1990s in the productive relationship between USMA's Department of Systems Engineering and the Program Manager (PM), Soldier Systems. More recently, at the request of the Program Executive Officer (PEO), Soldier, many other USMA departments (including the Department of Military Instruction and the Department of Physical Education) began conducting research and studies focused on the Land Warrior Program. In early September 2001, the OASAALT Military Deputy (MILDEP) requested that the academy consider opening the research and studies opportunity to others in the acquisition community. The academy concurred, and a Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) was prepared to document the relationship.

As we progress through academic year 02-03, the present research and studies program includes 10 departments and about 20 projects. More than 24 military and civilian faculty members, several commissioned graduate students, and many cadets accomplish this work. This year's study sponsors include PEO, Soldier; PM, Abrams and PM, Bradley; the Army Operational Test Command; the Army Research Laboratory; the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army (Operations Research); the Army Research Institute; and the Army Simulation, Training and Instrumentation Command.

## Topics

Examples of research and study topics span a broad spectrum, including modeling and simulation for decision support and training, optimization of security and storage for the soldier tactical mission system, soldier load configuration and squad lethality, land navigation and satellite imagery, protection from pathogens and chemical munitions, and power (source, sustainment, and management).

Past and ongoing studies have generated findings such as the value of intrasquad communications, optimization of security and storage for the Land Warrior System, methods for recharging



*The soldier remains our key to victory—the OASAALT-USMA Research and Studies Partnership will enhance our combat effectiveness.*

batteries for the Land Warrior, insights concerning land navigation, and the challenges of simulating infantry operations at the soldier level of detail.

## Purpose And Goals

The purpose of the OASAALT-USMA partnership is to provide the Army acquisition community interdisciplinary research and study conducted by commissioned officers, civilian faculty, and cadets to support both the mission of the academy and the AAE.

The goals of the partnership are to:

- Capitalize on USMA's Army field expertise, education level, and multidisciplinary organization to address acquisition research challenges;
- Provide developmental experience for commissioned and civilian faculty and cadets through research and study directed at actual Army acquisition issues; and
- Focus the research (dissertation and thesis) work of officers in advanced degree programs in anticipation of their follow-on assignments.

To succeed, the partnership effort must prove its worth by emphasizing interdepartmental and multiagency cooperation, and by providing timely, useful findings and recommendations at relatively low cost.

## Process

The process for starting and sustaining research and study within the

partnership is straightforward and easy. Further, the AAE and USMA have agreed that an Acquisition Systems Center of Excellence within the Department of Systems Engineering will manage the partnership. Study sponsors and the departments will work closely and cooperatively as the partnership moves forward. The OASAALT partnership administrator is PEO, Soldier, and the administrative duties for the academy rest within the Department of Systems Engineering. The process is coordinated and facilitated by the Acquisition Systems Center of Excellence.

A very attractive feature of this relationship is its simplicity. Study questions are solicited from potential sponsors and received by the center during the early fall of each year. The academic departments at USMA then formulate study proposals. Once the sponsors and departments agree on what will be done, the department prepares detailed study plans that may begin with cadet internships during the summer months. Finally, full research and study begins in Term 1 of the ensuing academic year (mid-August) and continues through May. The cycle is continuous and repeats itself in this manner.

In-process reviews are conducted at least quarterly, and reports, briefings, and presentations are prepared and delivered as appropriate. Projects may be multiyear or annual, depending on the complexity of the topic. Similarly, officers in graduate programs are "recruited" by the center, with the sup-

port of their prospective departments and the approbation of the Army sponsors.

## Conclusion

The Partnership for Research and Studies between the OASAALT and USMA appears to be a win-win opportunity for both signatories and the Army at large. With time and demonstrated value, it is expected to grow and bring real solutions to the myriad challenges that confront the Army acquisition community as it accomplishes its vital mission.

For further information regarding the partnership, contact COL Patrick A. Toffler (USA, Ret.), the Director of the Partnership's Acquisition Systems Development Center. He is responsible to the AAE and USMA to operate the partnership per the MOA and standard operating procedures that establish the relationship and govern its operation. Toffler can be contacted at (845) 938-8169, (914) 715-5693, or **Patrick.Toffler@us.army.mil**.

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